

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of the Claims:

1. *(Currently Amended)* A method of making a preform assembly, which includes the steps of:

- (a) providing a preform having a closed end,
- (b) providing an attachment object having a ring, and
- (c) assembling said attachment object to said preform by ~~telescoping said ring over said closed end until~~ bringing said ring ~~is brought~~ into abutting engagement with a portion of said preform in such a way that interference between said ring and said portion of said preform prevents dislodgement or removal of said attachment object during subsequent processing of the preform assembly.

2. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said ring is circumferentially continuous or circumferentially split.

3. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said step (c) is carried out by interference press fit between said ring and said preform.

4. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 3 wherein said preform has an angulated surface portion, and said ring is press fit onto said angulated surface portion of said body.

5. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 3 wherein said body has a cylindrical portion and said ring is press fit onto said cylindrical portion.

6. *(Currently Amended)* The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said step ~~(b)~~ (c) is carried out by securing said ring over one or more external retention features on said preform.

7. *(Currently Amended)* The method set forth in claim 6 wherein said step (a) includes pressure molding a preform having at least one integrally molded external retention feature, and wherein said step ~~(b)~~ (c) is carried out by telescopically fitting said ring over said closed end and over said retention feature.

8. *(Original)* A method of making a preform assembly for blow molding a container, which includes the steps of:

 (a) pressure molding a preform having a body and a finish with a flange and a protrusion adjacent to and spaced from said flange,

 (b) providing an attachment object having a ring, and

 (c) mounting said attachment object to said preform by moving said ring over said protrusion so that said ring is captured between said protrusion and said flange.

9. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 8 wherein said ring has an inner diameter that is less than the outer diameter of said protrusion, and wherein said step (c) includes

resiliently expanding said ring by passage over said protrusion such that said ring is received by snap fit between said protrusion and said flange.

10. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 9 wherein said outer diameter of said protrusion tapers toward said preform body for resiliently expanding said ring as said ring is received over said protrusion.

11. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 9 wherein said protrusion is selected from the group consisting of a retention bead and an array of retention gussets.

12. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 9 wherein said attachment object is selected from the group consisting of a handle, a label and a shroud.

13. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 9 including the step of: (d) blow molding said preform body to form a container to which said attachment object is secured.

14. *(Currently Amended)* A method of making a preform assembly for blow molding a container, which includes the steps of:

- (a) providing a preform having a body with a closed end,
- (b) providing an attachment object having a ring, and
- (c) mounting said attachment object to said preform by ~~moving said ring over said closed end and~~ bringing said ring into interference press fit with an outer surface of said preform.

15. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 14 wherein said preform has a portion with a tapering outer surface, and wherein said step (c) includes bringing said ring into interference fit with said tapering outer surface.

16. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 14 wherein said preform has a portion with a cylindrical outer surface, and wherein said step (c) includes bringing said ring into interference fit with said cylindrical outer surface.

17. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 14 wherein said ring is circumferentially continuous or circumferentially split.

18. *(Original)* A method of blow molding a hollow plastic container with attached object, which includes the steps of:

 (a) pressure molding a preform having a body and a finish with a flange and a protrusion adjacent to and spaced from said flange,

 (b) providing an attachment object having a ring,

 (c) mounting said attachment object to said preform by moving said ring over said protrusion so that said ring is captured between said protrusion and said capping flange, and

 (d) blow molding said preform body to form a container having said attachment object attached thereto.

19. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 18 wherein said ring has an inner diameter that is less than the outer diameter of said protrusion, and wherein said step (c) includes resiliently expanding said ring by passage over said protrusion such that said ring is received by snap fit between said protrusion and said flange.

20. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 19 wherein said outer diameter of said protrusion tapers toward said preform body for resiliently expanding said ring as said ring is received over said protrusion.

21. *(Original)* The method set forth in claim 19 wherein said protrusion is selected from the group consisting of a retention bead and an array of retention gussets.

22. *(Original)* A preform assembly for blow molding a hollow plastic container and constructed in accordance with the method set forth in claim 9.

23. *(Original)* A blow molded hollow plastic container constructed in accordance with the method set forth in claim 19.

24. *(Original)* A preform assembly that includes:
a preform and an attachment object,
said attachment object having a circumferentially continuous or circumferentially split ring in abutting external engagement with a portion of said preform in such a way that interference

between said ring and said portion of said preform prevents dislodgement or removal of said attachment object.

25. *(Original)* The preform assembly set forth in claim 24 wherein said ring is in surface press fit engagement with an external surface of said preform.

26. *(Original)* The preform assembly set forth in claim 24 wherein said ring is received over one or more attachment features on an external surface of said preform.

27. *(Original)* A finish on a hollow plastic preform or container, which includes:
a radially outwardly projecting circumferential flange,
an external protrusion spaced from said flange, and
an attachment object that includes an annular ring captured between said protrusion and said flange.

28. *(Original)* The finish set forth in claim 27 wherein said attachment object is selected from the group consisting of a handle, a label and a shroud.

29. *(Original)* The finish set forth in claim 27 wherein said protrusion is selected from the group consisting of a retention bead and an array of retention gussets.

30. *(Original)* The finish set forth in claim 27 wherein said annular ring is circumferentially split or circumferentially continuous.

31. *(New)* The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said step (c) is carried out by telescopically fitting said ring over said closed end of said preform.

32. *(New)* The method set forth in claim 14 wherein said step (c) is carried out by moving said ring over said closed end of said preform.